

V. Time Management, Overloaded schedules & Studying

The returning veterans now include not merely men who were in all stages of schooling, but men who have had varying degrees of success as students ---“The Veterans as I See Them” George E. Simmons. The Journal of Higher Education Vol. 17, No. 6 (Jun., 1946), pp. 315-318



Three top learning goals:

1) Point out that student veterans often do not yet understand that ‘time cost of a course’ is more than in-class hours plus HW – that each course’s supporting ‘units’ will add to time required to successfully pass a course (tutoring, HW, study, group, service learning, events, office hours, etc);

2) Develop and strongly ‘suggest’ a handout, link or straight referral to college resources for time management skills as part of ‘required recommendations’ for student veterans;

3) Understand the impact and risk of tough combo schedules and ‘closely clustered’ due dates to enable proactive early alert measures or informal advising during office hours

ABSTRACT:

Time management is one of those things that makes or break a student – doubly so for a student veteran. Add the strong possibility that the student veteran chose their schedule mostly/solely based on times that worked, and yet more issues arise. Explaining what the real time cost of a course is, UP FRONT, along with cost of each course’s supporting ‘units’ (tutoring, HW, study, group, service learning, events, office hours, etc), can help. Some basic ‘situational awareness’ about the risks of combining some types of classes, plus a few other tips/tricks that can be given during office hours, early alert interventions, or by advising or handout, help even further. Time management ‘tricks’ can spell the difference between retention failure and a successful semester – for student, and by extension, for faculty.

BRIEFINGS:

Time management becomes a faculty concern usually only when ‘good students’ start to fall behind/headed to an early alert, or when a student veteran comes in an office hour and by proxy you may now become the advice that will either retain the student veteran or alienate them (possibly)

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from college altogether. A little perspective from a student veteran point of view on time management can inform good recommendations.

There is an ordered schedule for waking, eating, work. PT. Free time. Almost everyone around you has a similar type of schedule/there is a familiar rhythm to the base or military community or workplace. Maybe a buddy or NCO will get to you if you screw up. Suddenly the schedule is up to you. Whatever you want. What ever could happen?

Easiest way to a point is a straight line. Take the comp sci, physics, calculus, engineering class all in one semester. As long as classes don't overlap or conflict with work shifts or other responsibilities, should be fine. Show up. Endure. What ever could go wrong?

How many hours on average per class? It's right on your schedule: start and end times. What about study and crunch time for deadlines? What about the extra time it will take when you aren't understanding the work or the examples? What about when you get sick and miss a week of classes? When it's busy time at work? When you need to go to tutoring because the lesson didn't make sense? When your family or deployed friends are experiencing a crisis? Why you are experiencing crisis? When you have to meet as a group? When two people in your group flake out – didn't do the work as promised, or maybe didn't even show up because the latest version of their favorite video game was coming out and they had to wait outside of Gamestop all night to be the first to get it, and they all (except you) are going to meet up after class – right when you need to be at work or home?

Time management is one of those things that makes or break a student – doubly so for a student veteran suddenly faced with lack of structure, and who doesn't know that time in class is half the time a required by the course and maybe – maybe – a fourth of the actual time impacted. Then add in the fact that many student veterans have built in reasons for procrastination – doesn't want to be in class, is transitioning to this 'foreign' world of college so just needs any tipping point not to go, has low morale of having to work with sometimes uncaring students who are late on a whim, and maybe the student veteran even has legitimately no idea that classroom learning takes so long compared to learn, checklist, apply in the field or position. Sprinkle the strong possibility that the student veteran chose their schedule without awareness that some combinations of subject matter are nightmares for consuming time, and without trying to avoid courses that have same time of year crunch times/deadlines, and you have the perfect storm for burn out, missed deadlines, failure, loss of caring and full out mid-semester or end of semester crash, stress, and/or anger.

Class time is a thrown rock that skips/ripples on the quickly drying lake of available time. The ripples will affect work time, time with family/social life. When push comes to shove, if it's mid semester or end of semester and the choice is between a responsibility to family, work, unit or other non-academic commitments, versus time demands outside of sitting in class that was NEVER explained as part of what would be required to pass the class (beyond the syllabus which no one reads), the latter will lose among priorities every (nearly every) time.

1) Explaining what the real time cost is of a course UP FRONT and each course's supporting 'units' (tutoring, HW, study, group, service learning, events, office hours, etc); 2) some basic training or individualized sessions on time management skills; 3) some quick advising and self-driven reality

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checks on choosing classes for schedule sensibilities, 4) attempts to look for crossover between content and keeping variety in exam/paper/assessment due dates when choosing classes, can spell the difference between retention failure and a successful semester – for student, and by extension, for faculty.

Finally, with military, someone is always there to check that things are getting done. Stakes are huge, not just failure, but letting down your buddies, humiliation, sense of betrayal. Without time management, some vets go in with this attitude, but then shrug off, it's just a course, it's just a paper, I'd settle for a B.. for a C... done.

Table of Contents for Teaching Spaces (campus, classroom, Elearning)

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- 3) Don't forget notetaking workshops, and if can't make on-campus workshops, there is always youtube
- 4) Overloaded schedule

13 Samples scenarios

Faculty TIP 1): Give extra credit for attending on campus time management workshops.

Extra credit really is an any-student effective carrot to get someone to something they really need – though they may not think it's worthwhile or effective until giving planning/time management strategies a shot (as presented on your campus).

Faculty TIP 2): 4 time management essentials often overlooked by student veterans If you can spend a few minutes specifically on time management for your subject/discipline and assignments (or in an office hour 'help session'), make sure to recommend/cover:

starting up: Starting a HW, essay, assignment is for many the hardest part. A student should plan for extra time just to get the start going/flow going on study, writing, or other school work.

sick times: In graphing out a calendar/schedule, have students plan/imagine being sick 1 week in the semester and come up with a strategy on how they would catch up, make up the work.

calendar in work schedule: Work schedule + travel time should be part of any time management plotting onto a calendar or work flow.

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Family/military milestones and events: Calendaring in any particular military milestone events and family events (parent teacher day; important student performance, etc) will help with realistic scheduling against days where the student will not be available – at the least will not be putting in much time doing school work/alerts student veteran to dates to avoid versus deadlines.

Faculty TIP 3): Don't forget notetaking workshops, and if can't make on-campus workshops, there is always youtube:

Recommend Note taking workshops on campus or using youtube to improve time management. Military training is mostly drilling and hands on and checklists. For some testing is 2 or 3 times to retake the test but must get 100% to pass. Many take too many, some no notes. When searching youtube for notetaking tips or time management tips, follow the search term structure of ["taking notes" <subject>]

For example:

"taking notes" in calculus

"taking notes" in Chemistry

Faculty TIP 4): Overloaded schedule: "In the military you do one thing/speciality at a time versus 3-4 different classes/subject each semester."¹ This will be culture shock for many student veterans who are used to "Training to standard, not time". The only thing you can do as faculty is explain that this will increase time needed for school – for switching mindset – and the more overloaded the schedule, the higher the risk of exams and other heavy due dates landing on the same days. Choosing the right schedule combination and a realistic number of classes (better to pass 3 classes with A's and B's then fail 2 out of 4 and get C's on the other two) is something to do CAREFULLY – hopefully in consult with an academic advisor (especially if there is a veteran specific academic advisor) or at least in informal recommendation seeking from SVO members.

13 Sample SCENARIOS* relevant for TIME Management, Overloaded schedules & Studying

for instructions on how to use Sample Scenarios, go to HOW TO USE TOOLKIT chapter/module and read: "How to use SCENARIOS: Teachable Moments strategy or as Faculty Development exercises"

SCENARIO 1:	How many classes can I miss – what do I have to do just to pass this class?
SCENARIO 2:	Needs an extension (email day before deadline). May/may not say simply overestimated time need, may/may not claim feeling overwhelmed from military related needs, anniversary dates or

¹ Eric Wheeler, Monroe Community College – SUNY; - Hamaria Crockett, Cedar Valley College. "Barriers in Higher Education: Supporting Transitioning and Returning Service Members." League of Innovations 2014 Conference, Anaheim CA. Forum Session

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	happenings overseas.
SCENARIO 3:	A student misses three consecutive classes. Sends an email pleading not to drop, will put student in financial jeopardy (living allowance cost, course payback, drops below full time status) and student assures he or she can make up the work if given the chance. [optional scenario: student does not show up that first class if given the chance].
SCENARIO 4:	Alerting you I will need to miss a week (for funeral, battle buddy in foreign hospital, giving support for a former unit member going through life crisis, etc). What can I do to not get dropped? I promise I can make up the work. Even if I stayed in class during this time I couldn't focus on anything school related anyway.
SCENARIO 5:	GI Bill benefits end next semester. Can you approve me late [missed 1 st week]/over-enroll me in your class (the 6 th on my schedule)?
SCENARIO 6:	I have no quiet place to study. Can I sit in during your office hour to get work done?
SCENARIO 7:	I have VA surgeries scheduled this semester. Don't know specific dates and I don't have control over their choice. Could take me out for a few classes. Will this be an issue/can I make up work as needed to get through the course?
SCENARIO 8:	I missed a week for (funeral, friend's suicide, battle buddy in foreign hospital, giving support for a former unit member going through life crisis, etc). I am sorry I could not notify you before this. What can I do to not get dropped? I promise I can make up the work. Even if I stayed in class during this time I couldn't have focused on anything school related anyway.
SCENARIO 9:	Requests deadlines accommodation due to disabilities.
SCENARIO 10:	Unit may activate near end of semester. Can I reschedule/take exams or submit final papers after/early/online instead of on regular date?
SCENARIO 11:	Unit will likely activate near end of semester. I will only get 72 hours warning. Can I reschedule/take exams or submit final papers after/early/online instead of on regular date?
SCENARIO 12:	Wants to keep taking course but coming from work so 10 minutes late every day and wants to know if that's okay.
SCENARIO 13:	Your course activities has required activities outside of class schedule and can't attend them with work and family responsibilities (different scenario: those activities were NOT listed in your syllabus first day)

***Where are the solutions?** There are too many different ways to 'solve' each, agreeing and disagreeing, similar and dissenting, so instead you have 1)the scenario 2)suggested steps in Chapter ["HOW to USE Toolkit"](#) to find your own localized solutions. **Forcing people to start discussions - active learning -- rather than reading/skimming what I thought/found worked in MY location/culture is the key to action and owning the problem and approaches.** Only homegrown solutions SOLVE WITH PURPOSE